

51. Verses 13-15 constitute a parenthesis; verse 16 concludes the subject matter of verse 12 (read the two verses together).
52. If the Gentiles “perish without the Law (Mosaic)”, then how can they be held accountable, since God possesses the attribute of justice?
53. Although the Gentiles are “without the Law/have not the Law”, nevertheless they are not devoid of law.
54. Paul asserts that the Gentiles “are a law to themselves” (not to be taken in the current popular sense).
55. Because they “do instinctively the things of the Law” (of Moses) they are subject to the same treatment as those who have the Law (Jews).
56. The moral requirements of God’s righteousness have been made known to them through the resident conscience.
57. “By nature”, or “instinctively”, is contrasted with an external revelation—the Law given at Sinai.
58. Pagans not possessing the Law confront themselves with the righteous moral requirements of the Law as per: “they are a law to themselves.”
59. People who are unregenerate and depraved possess a sense of right and wrong, and what is fair and unfair.
60. “They show the work of the Law written in their hearts.”
61. Pagans pursue lawful occupations, establish families, demonstrate natural affection, take care of the needy, formulate criminal codes, etc.
62. Some societies are more enlightened than others.
63. Conscience is evidence of our inherent moral nature, and it is located in the hearts of men (v. 15a).
64. Conscience is one of the attributes of the living soul, and part of which, makes us in the image of God (along with volition).
65. An evidence that the Law is written in their hearts is accusation and exculpation (a clearing of fault); hence the phrase “their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them.”
66. The pagan Gentile evaluates his thought processes as good or bad.
67. Further, the Gentiles in dialogue express their convictions (thoughts) in accusation or exculpation (synonyms: exonerate, absolve, acquit, vindicate).
68. In summary: the Gentiles are culpable just like the Jews, since: (1) they do instinctively the things of the Law; (2) their conscience bears witness to right and wrong; (3) their thoughts are expressed in conversation in accusation and exculpation.
69. As noted in chapter one the Gentiles are “without excuse” with regard to the existence and essence of God due to the physical creation.
70. Unbelieving Jews and Gentiles (at God consciousness and gospel hearing) will appear before a final judgment (e.g., “in a day” ἐν ἡμέρᾳ).
71. Two features of the Great White Throne Judgment are brought to our attention in verse 16: (1) judgment of “the secrets of men”; and, (2) “according to my gospel.”
72. God who knows perfectly the thoughts (and actions) of men will refresh each and every person of their negative volition.
73. This judgment will expose man’s most private and innermost thoughts.
74. Christ will judge them all “according to [Paul’s] gospel.”
75. Paul’s gospel calls for obedience expressed in saving faith (cf. Acts 16:31; Jn. 3:36 cp. Rom. 2:8; 2 Thess. 1:8; Heb. 5:9; 1 Pet. 4:17).

76. God will show each and every person that they did not want to seek Him, even at the most basic level.
77. Also, the last judgment will expose the fallacy of salvation by good deeds.
78. Jesus Christ will administer the last judgment (Jn. 12:48; Acts 10:42; 2 Tim. 4:1; Rev. 20:11).